

FOREST LEAVES

POEMS AND SONNETS

BY THE LATE
Rev. CHARLES E. O'HARA TOBIN,
C.F., N.Z.E.F.

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To John
from
Bill
4/85

PREFACE.

This small collection of poems by the Rev. Charles E. O'Hara Tobin have been published by his widow as a token of regard for her late husband, and she thinks there are many amongst his friends who will appreciate his verses—some were found amongst his papers after his death.

Charles E. O'Hara Tobin was born at New Plymouth, New Zealand, in 1879, and was the eldest son of the late William H. J. Tobin of Tauranga, New Zealand. A cadet of an ancient Irish family, and a great-great nephew of John Tobin, whose comedy "The Honeymoon," at one time enjoyed great vogue and popularity.

He was a student at the Auckland University and also at St. John's Theological College, Auckland; was ordained priest 1910, and after serving some years in Wellington and in the diocese, was for nearly five years a Chaplain to the N.Z.E.F. in Egypt, Malta and France. On returning to New Zealand in 1919 he was appointed Principal of Hikurangi College, Carterton, Wairarapa, where he died after a short illness, the result of active service, in the spring of this year, 1921.

REMEMBRANCE.

FOREWORD.

*To follow Fancy's footsteps light
Where'er she chance to guide,
Upon the slopes of bush-clad height,
Or by the lake's cool tide.*

*To hear her voice, though faint and low,
In rustling of the leaves,
Or in the darkening streamlet's flow
As spells at eve she weaves.*

*To use her rod to sound some deep
Within the human heart,
To seek her aid to rouse from sleep
The memory of the past*

*Once played by those who long ago
On Death's dark sea set sail,
These my desires, but well I know
That oft my quest may fail.*

*Nor often may my lips repeat
The message that I hear,
In fitting words whose rhythmic beat
May charm another's ear.*

The crimson sunset's parting glow
Recalls bright days of long ago
When we together watched the snow
 On Egmont's peak,
And listened to the babbling flow
 Of forest creek.

Then from the range's sombre wall
Echoed a *tui's* ringing call,
A moment stirred the forest tall
 Then hushed in sleep,
And all around there seemed to fall
 A silence deep.

A jewel set within the west
Fair Hesper slowly sank to rest,
And o'er the mountain's snowy crest
 The moonlight fell.
We parted then, perhaps 'twas best,
 I cannot tell.

For when unbidden come again
Those old, old thoughts, swift numbing pain
Sends sudden chill through every vein,
 And even here
Upon the verge of Taupo's plain
 Thou seemest near.

But dare I hope, when severed now
From home and friends, that surely thou
Remembr'est still that parting vow
 Beneath the vine
That firmly clung to sheltering bough
 Of ancient pine.

For others now may with thee stray
 Beside the stream at close of day
 And watch the changing colours play
 Upon thy cheek,
 While I am banished far away
 And cannot speak.

No marvel that I long for sight
 Of love-lit eyes I deemed as bright
 As stars whose tender gleaming light
 In heaven seen,
 Dispels the gloom that clings to night.
 That sable queen.

O for the days when, fance in rest,
 At some fair Northern maid's behest,
 Our fathers flung with ruthless jest
 Their foes to earth,
 When wealth was not the surest test
 Of human worth.

When for the sake of lady fair,
 A silken knot or braid of hair,
 A knight in tourney oft would dare
 His fate to try,
 In many a gallant charge would share
 With ardour high.

For then I still might dare to dream
 Of crowned hopes and joys that seem
 As distant now as fitful beam
 Of far off light
 That comes from stars that softly gleam
 On brow of night.

IN CRYSTAL DEPTHS.

"Pur remembrer des ancessours
 Les faits et les dits et les mours."
 —*Roman de Rou.*

Amid the leaves beside the pool,
 Beneath the tree-ferns' shadow cool,
 I dreamed of days for ever fled,
 Days when the long forgotten dead
 Not yet had passed that gateway dark,
 Whose gloom still mocks all claim to mark
 The new-waked spirits' onward flight
 Through realms close hid from human sight,
 Days when they trod the hall and lea
 Or faced the dangers of the sea.

There, as I mused, those waters clear
 Mirror'd another who drew near,
 Beyond the image of mine own
 Another face was dimly shown
 With snowy beard and downcast look,
 And there, me thought, beside the brook
 Silent I saw an old man stand,
 A pilgrim's staff within his hand.

"Nay, rise not now," he calmly spoke,
 "Thy roving fancies here have woke
 From sleep my powers to limn the past.
 In spectral guise from spaces vast
 I come old memories to renew."

Around the glade a glance he threw,
 Then, downward pointing, bade me look
 Within the depths of that still brook,
 And wonder seized me, for there drew
 A mist across, and shadows grew
 And changed till in the deep there lay
 The semblance of a bygone day,
 A grove of oaks, a rocky pass,
 The sunlight glinting on the grass,

And back to back a roving band
Of armèd traders forced to stand
By men who from the thickets burst
In onset fierce, swift arrows first
Their passage marked, and, on the way,
Pierced by a bolt a victim lay,
But brief the fray and put to flight
The packmen, for unequal fight
They courted here.

"No ill-clad kerne
They faced that day, but warrior stern,
Whose dinted helm and plumes of snow
Had led the way 'gainst prouder foe
And tested were his axe and shield
By blows exchanged on many a field,
See, with the leader, men at arms
Trained in the midst of war's alarms,
And archers from the English coast,
Fore-runners of the fearless host
That broke the ranks at Crecy's fight
Of restless France's mailèd might."

So spoke the wizard as the scene
Faded as though had never been
That glimpse from out another age.

"'Tis written on an ancient page
That mandate of the English king
Did shame on fierce St. Albyn bring,
And Comsy's oaks were felled to mark
His vengeance for the foray dark."

But soon I saw another sight,
Dim in the gloom of clouded night
An ancient hall, while nearer stood
A group beside a shadowy wood,
Lit by the dancing torches' glare
Maidens and steel-clad men were there,
And in the midst a stately dame
With eyes for none but those who came,
A band of horsemen through the snow
Moving with weary pace and slow.

Their pennons stained and armour rent,
And gaze upon the litter bent
They guarded there till, when at last
They laid it down, the lady cast
Her veil aside and knelt to press
Her lips with half-hid tenderness
Upon the warrior's forehead cold
Whom ne'er again might she behold
Living as when he left her side
To plunge in battle's crimson tide.
Then, as the lady turned to rise,
A child who watched with wondering eyes
Slipped from a maiden's grasp and sped
Towards the living and the dead,
And, as the vision passed away,
The old man said—

"His parents they,
That child too young to know his loss,
Or dream that should the foemen cross
The moors in search of those who brought
That body from the field fresh-fought
Of Towton, where the crimson rose
Lay trampled in th'ensanguined snows,
That night might be a night of fear
For those who dwelt at Middlemere.
Those halls whose rafters once did ring
With echoing welcome of the king
When the first Edward on his way
To Scotland's border made a stay
Beneath his vassal's friendly roof,
And of his fealty found the proof,
Might light the sky with spouting flame
If York's fierce warriors thither came."

As the voice ceased I pondered still
Upon the wizard's wondrous skill
That brought before me days of old,
But now another page unrolled,
For, shadowed in the mystic deep,
Appeared an island rising steep
From out the sparkling tropic seas,
And palms were swaying in the breeze

That 'neath the summer sun was born,
While in the canes the negroes torn
From Afric's shores were clearly seen
As spots of sable midst the green.
Within a bay a little town
O'er which a lofty peak looked down
Lay sleeping in the summer haze,
Silent beneath the sun's fierce rays.
Without that old man's words, I ween,
I knew from whence that tropic scene
Set in the magic Spanish main,
Link in the Leeward Islands' chain,
There swayed the palms of Stoney Grove
Where oft in dreams my fancies rove,
And there was spent the early life
Of famous Nelson's injured wife.
Once more the vision passed away
And came in place Aboukir Bay,
The darkness of old Egypt's night
Let by the glare from close locked fight.
Brought into play, the British guns
Bore down the might of France's sons,
And drooped th'imperial eagle's wing
Torn in the lion's resistless spring.
Tangled and splintered, in the glare,
Wreckage of gallant craft was there,
Beneath the light-fleck'd trembling wave
Their dauntless crews found fitting grave.
Fain would I there have watched the fray
Till paled the battle-light and day,
Chasing the shadows o'er the sands,
Claimed lordship o'er those eastern lands,
But while the contest fiercely raged,
And grimly ship with ship engaged,
Back to the gloom from which it broke
Fled swift the fight and I awoke.
All that had passed was but a dream,
No wizard stood beside the stream
Darker and longer shadows lay
Across the vale, the hours of day
Were speeding fast, and, as I rose
To trace once more the path that goes

Around the hill and through the glade
Where sunlight filters through the shade
Of *pongā* and of *nikau* palm,
I felt that as a morning calm
Is stirred at times by pulsings light
From dying storm of yesternight,
So as we lie in slumber deep
The fleeting dreams that cross our sleep
May hold the memories handed down
By sire to son, of smile or frown
Of Fortune in the days now dead
Of long-loved home or hours of dread
And thus at times may we behold
The paths our fathers trod of old.

AKITIO.

Among sheep dotted hills the river winds
Keeping past bluff and bush her stedfast way
In peace or tumult, till at last she finds
The homesteads past, the flying salt sea spray
In welcome greet her as a new-wed bride
Of Tangaroa, lord of ocean wide.

DIANA.

Southward the driving rain enshrouds each spur
The river's face with heavy falling drops
Is dimpled as I watch, the branches stir,
Waked by the storms' cool breath, while sudden stops
The joyous hum
Of myriad insects silenced by the chill
Though lurking mid the leaves of deep bough'd tree
And swift and sure, guiding with careless skill
Her steed across the short wet grass I see
Diana come

Racing the raindrops as they faster fall
 Till o'er the stiff wire fence that bars the way
 The horse with one light bound her instant call
 Unhesitating answers, and the day
 Seems bright again
 As Dian nearer rides. Still frank and clear
 Her glances as of old, still unafraid
 As when in other guise, with bow and spear
 And maiden train she ranged Platcean shade
 Or Argive plain.

TO FRANCE.

For three long weary years, fair land of France,
 Thy sons have mocked the bursts of heathen rage
 Amid thy war-scarred hills, have kept their gage
 That nearer to thy heart should ne'er advance
 While life was their's the thrust of savage lance
 Gripped by the Hunnish hordes. Though the bright page
 Is dimmed by tears of those who scarce assuage
 Their grief with thoughts of deeds that now enhance
 The story of the dead, their record lives.
 And Britain, too, through all those bloodstained days
 Has steadfast been. With outpoured blood and gold
 Her compact has been sealed. The Empire gives,
 And ever gives, her best. Thy people's praise
 Of her Dominions' aid thou best hast told.

FOREST LEAVES.

Past where the breezes wet fern fronds are lifting
 From out the clear cool wave,
 O forest leaves upon the lone creek drifting,
 What is the end ye crave ?

" Soon, too soon, in a dark pool slowly sinking,
 Perchance we all may die,
 While thirsty bush birds far above us drinking,
 Dream not that there we lie.

Thoughts of the days when forest folk were flying
 In shelter 'neath our shade.
 Haunt us as now we know that we are dying
 And all our dreams must fade.

May these pure waters from the mountain streaming
 Bear us upon their breast
 To where some exile from the bush lies dreaming
 And give his spirit rest."

HOKIANGA IN SUMMER.

Most charming when on splendid summer days
 Beneath a spreading tree we rest and mark
 The joyous flight of fantail or of lark,
 For then the bright sun's downward beating rays
 Turn wand'ring thoughts to many tiny bays,
 Or to thy harbour where some stately bark
 May lie in tranquil ease, and the cool dark
 Depths invite us, while far away the haze
 Dims the horizon. Or to sylvan streams
 Rippling o'er rocky beds, and whisp'ring low
 To drooping ferns that rustle overhead,
 While mid the boughs the pigeons' plumage gleams
 And tui's call and moving to and fro
 The restless parrots seek their daily bread,

TAUPO MOANA.

Fair Taupo Moana ! How calm and still
 Thou liest 'neath the rays of early morn
 Soft bathed in tender light. The mists that dawn
 Revealed have vanished. Thou wilt sleep until
 Through every valley, past each lonely hill
 Light playful winds come dancing down, new born
 Of sun and purest air, and on thy worn
 Volcanic beach the wavelets work their will.
 Three giant mountains guard thy southern shore
 And wreathing steam clouds from their summits rise
 Like sighs betok'ning mighty throes that shake
 Our mother earth. When evening comes once more
 Bedeck'd with sunset hues to glad our eyes
 They watch thy slumbers, deep mysterious lake.

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

Distant from busy crowds and noisy mart
 Our Alma Mater stands, and to her breast
 We toiling students come in the fair quest
 Of learning, which should arm us for our part
 In this stern life of ours, steel every heart
 To meet the joys and griefs that ere we rest
 From our life's work, will come to e'cn the best
 Of those that gather here. Should Cupid's dart
 Disturb our peace, and smile or witching glance
 Of maiden fair within these buildings old
 Seem more to us than problem or than prose
 We'll hide the wound until the College dance
 Then by the music sweet made still more bold
 Seek favour from these maids of azure hose.

VÆ VICTIS.

Unmindful of the sunset gold
 That bathes the autumn sheaves
 And careless how the buds unfold
 Amid the roses' leaves
 My thoughts beyond my garden stra
 My heart is numb with pain,
 All conscious that one perfect day
 Will never come again.

The rose upon the southern wall
 Droops now her golden head,
 Her glowing petals fade and fall
 Like hopes for ever dead ;
 A rose that might have graced to-day
 The breast of lady bright
 Dies wasted on the bough a prey
 To all the winds of night.

For me as well the sun is set
 The rose of hope lies dead,
 Like bird within the fowler's net
 I strive to break the thread
 That holds me captive, binds me still,
 But struggles yet are vain,
 Would that I could obey her will
 Tear from my heart this pain.

My lady bids me dream no more.
 She bids me quench the flame
 Love lit within my soul of yore
 When o'er my path she came;
 No answering fire her spirit knows,
 Friendship alone she yields,
 The snowdrop for the crimson rose,
 The lily of the fields.

Before me looms that outer dark
 Where unquiet spirits roam,
 And where of hope each glowing spark
 Lies hissing neath the foam
 That flies before the icy gale
 Across the deserts there,
 And gloomy stalks the spectre pale
 Of heavy-eyed Despair.

For there are those whom anger red
 Or madness' awful hand,
 Or chance, or bitter fate hath led
 To haunt that dismal strand
 Where dreadful deeds or visions vain
 Can ne'er forgotten be
 By those who wander, wring with pain,
 Nor can from pain be free.

This pain with which my being thrills,
 This shadow on my way
 Would fly as flies from yonder hills
 At dawning of the day;
 The mists and gloom of sombre night
 If but my love could turn
 The wayward heart of lady bright
 For whom I still must yearn.

IN THE BUSH.

" But Nymphs and Fairies, by the banks did sit
 In the woods' shade which did the waters crown."

—Spencer.

" A glimpse of Fauns and Dryades,
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees."

—Keats.

Down in that northern forests' cooling shade
 My tired body on the moss I laid,
 Secure within the leafy fastness deep
 Where e'en the very air was lulled to sleep,
 Sooth'd by the joyousplash of mountain rill
 As down it hurried from the distant hill,
 Whose bush-clad slopes flung back the sun's fierce
 rays

Each noontide clear throughout the summer days.
 Past *nikau* groves and graceful *ponga* tall
 Springling the air with spray at every fall,
 Seeking the river in the vale below,
 Careless of time that tiny stream did flow.
 Well might it linger here and there to cool
 The fronds of drooping ferns that fring'd each pool
 Or quench the thirst of stately forest trees
 Whose massive boughs still waited for the breeze
 That later to the distant sea would bear
 The varied woodland scents that filled the air,
 A fair return for myriad raindrops shed
 As passed at times some teeming cloud o'erhead.
 Silent was now the pigeon's wooing call,
 Silent the dwellers in the forest all,
 Save when the flutter of some *tui*'s wing
 A movement mid the drowsy leaves would bring
 When startled by the shadow of his swoop
 She sought fresh shelter from the hawk's dread stoop.
 Awhile I listened to the far off tide
 Beating against the dark reef's jagged side
 And crossing as it lapped the snowy sands
 The ancient folktales learnt in many lands,
 Faint sounded in my ears as in a dream
 That mingled music of the sea and stream.

While on the verge of sleep my senses hung,
Some drops of water on my forehead flung
Bade me awake and meet the downward look
Of one who smiled to see the halfshut book
Fall from my startled grasp, a volume old
Of stories of the days when elves were bold
And fairies in the woods of other lands
Clasping in joyous dance each other's hands
Beneath the moonbeams sported free from care
Moving as lightly as the summer air.

Her tresses round her as a mantle drawn
Were dark as is that hour before the dawn
Ere night across the sea reluctant flies.
And darker seem'd those merry sparkling eyes
That met my own with careless mocking glance,
Seeing me held as yet within a trance.
Fairer than Maori maid she seemed to be
Tho' bronzed as child of sunny clime should be.
Caught in her locks red rata blossoms shone
Her slender waist was belted with a zone
Of white convolvulus, but freshly torn
From some fair forest shrub it clasp'd that morn.

"Be still Opakeha"—her voice was sweet—
Dropping a shower of blossom to her feet
She sank upon the streamlet's leaf strewn edge
And resting there against a rocky ledge
Waited for me to speak. Was this a dream?
Was she a naiad from the mountain stream,
Of which in boyhood I had traced the course,
Seeking amid the ferns its distant source.

Ere but to frame a question I could try
"One of the Patupaiarehe I"
As answer to th' unspoken words there came
"A fairy thou?" at once that ancient name
Brought mem'ries of the Maori legends old
To me, a child, by long dead chieftain told.
"Art thou immortal?" "Yea, while flow the streams
And bush clad ranges greet the sun's first beams,

While o'er those gleaming sands there flies the spray
And bush birds hush their songs at close of day.
Or glitter to the stars the southern snows,
And o'er the plains the dread nor-wester blows,
We spirits of the creek and wood and air
Roam as our fancy bids these islands fair."

Her low voice hush'd. But ere a minute fled
"Child of that fairy queen with Tura wed
From Otea's isle I came in ancient days
To link my fate with that of kindred fays
Who long ere Maori foot had touch'd the strand
Dwelt without let throughout the peaceful land.
But when across the seas those warriors came
Searching each peaceful glade with spear and flame
And in their lust for rule their weapons turned
Each upon other, then the fires that burned
Within their savage breasts could only fade
When quench'd with blood and 'neath the vengeful
blade
Of *taiaha* or *mere* dark the life
Of foemen ebb'd amid the fatal strife.
What wonder then if we, the fairies, fled
With saddened hearts and drooped averted head
To seek the shelter of the forest deep
Or roam the lofty mountain crests that sleep
Amid the clouds, from thence to ride the gales
That sweep adown the slopes and thro' the vales
Where once our race with peaceful rule held sway.
At times we watch'd throughout the livelong day
The dusky children sporting in the surf
Or stretch'd in careless slumber on the turf
Beside the *taro* plots where women's toil
Wrung for their lords a tribute from the soil."

"What of Te Kanawa, or legend old
Of Kahukura, by the Maori told?"

"Te Kanawa we saw, of whom the Maori say
That roving thro' the bush one summer day
In search of *kiwi* on the wooded height
Of Pukemore, resting for the night

He slept in peace beneath a mighty tree
 Upon the topmost peak, whence one might see
 Waikato's waters gleam. Into his dreams
 There came the soothing sound of murmur'ring streams
 That took their rise in every gully near
 Till sudden roused from sleep the chief could hear
 Upon the breeze the strange unwelcome sound
 Of myriad voices as we gathered round
 Flocking from torrent wave and mossy dell
 Summoned from peak and lake by fairy spell.
 Behind the boulders rough and thickets dark
 We crouched and watched the slowly dying spark
 That flickered yet within each ash strewn brand
 Flashing and fading, now that hunter band
 Lay locked in sleep amid the forest spoils
 But waking with their chieftain within the toils
 Unseen yet potent, wrought by elfin hands,
 Woven by moonlight on th' enchanted sands
 Of some far distant long forgotten shore
 And powerless as their fathers were of yore
 When held by phantom bonds, they lay in fear.
 While as the fire died down we drew more near.
 At last Te Kanawa, tho' quaking yet
 With dread of those who cast that magic net
 Loos'd from his neck the greenstone tiki old,
 Won from a southern foe in foray bold.
 And with a shark's tooth that his ear adorned
 Praying the sacrifice might not be scorned,
 These as an offering on a splinter hung
 Within the glow the dying embers flung
 Athwart that gloomy space. From hand to hand
 The heirlooms passed throughout our eager band.
 And as their shadows in that ruddy light
 Lay on our palms we grasped as fairies might
 The semblance dim and last the gifts we laid
 Upon the ground, and sought the deeper shade
 Content with that we bore, for now afar
 There gleamed within the east the morning star.
 While as the day grew bright and darkness fled
 Homeward adown the slopes the hunters sped
 No more the *kiwi* on that range they sought.
 So deep the fear one darksome hour had brought.

Of Kahukura I but know the tale
 How long ago beneath the starlight pale
 Led by their laughter to the wave wash'd strand
 He found the fairy fishers on the sand
 Of Rangiaowhia, drawing from the tide
 Its gleaming spoils so stealing to the side
 Of those who hauled upon the laden net
 With them he toiled, for never Maori yet
 Fishing in foam fleck'd sea or quiet mere
 Tho' skill'd in use of curious hook or spear
 Had dreamt of such a means his prey to snare
 As that rush net, elf-wrought with patient care.
 And so unheeded by the fairy throng
 The mortal Kahukura laboured long
 Until the clear cool sky with ruddy light
 Flushed as the far Orient fires grew bright.
 With the first gleams of that returning day
 Seizing their fish the fairies fled away
 Leaving the net as Kahukura's spoil
 The prize for which he joined their evening toil.
 And so ere long there spread from bay to bay
 The knowledge Kahukura gained that day,
 And on these island coasts the Maori yet
 Honour his name who won for them that net."

The maiden paus'd—A moment's silence fell,
 Then from my sight she vanish'd—who can tell
 What fancies fairies move. I know that she
 No more that day came forth to speak with me.
 Nor yet on other days that I have been
 Since then within that upland forest green.
 Perhaps on her some sudden spell was laid
 Calling her from that deep nook's pleasant shade
 To seek the presence of her mighty queen
 Enthron'd in realms by mortal eye unseen.
 Perchance 'twas not for long her spirit might
 Endure the ardent gaze of mortal wight.
 Whate'er the reason, this at least I know,
 Whether in forest dark or mountain snow.
 She roves in freedom, she will come once more
 With tales of long forgotten days of yore,
 Then may it be my lot with her to meet
 And for a moment stay her flying feet.

TO A FALLEN KAURI.

Dethronèd Monarch, round thy branches wide
 For ages every changing breeze hath blown
 A message bringing from the ocean tide
 Or mountain dark. By will of man o'erthrown
 Thou liest now amidst the trembling ferns
 That shyly grow within this little space
 Thy kingdom once, now ruined by thy fall.

The greed that ever burns
 Within man's breast hath marked thy mighty race
 For swift approaching death, the fate of all.

What untold memories hide within each cell
 Of that huge frame of thine, for thou wert here
 In rude far distant days when struck with fear
 Each Briton bent beneath the Roman yoke,
 Or Saxon clash'd with Dane in conflict stern
 In that dear Motherland beyond the seas,
 E'en then in thunder broke
 The clouds above thy head, while every fern
 That dwelt beneath lay sheltered from the breeze.

A thousand passing seasons saw thy form
 Uplifted high above the trees around
 Full proudly meet each fiercely driving storm,
 Ere yet the first adventurous Maori found
 His way across the surging waves that dash
 With ever restless force upon the shore
 Of fair Zealandia. Then in harbour still.
 At last thou heards't the splash
 Of dripping paddles, and canoes that bore
 From far Hawaiki those that fled from ill.

On yonder frowning cliff they dwelt a space
 In safety from the ever dreaded foe:
 Whose oft repeated raids left ghastly trace
 Beside the stream and in the vale below
 When tattooed warriors closed in awful strife
 And sounds of battle fierce were borne to thee

Upon the shrieking wind or wails for those
 So swiftly hurled from life
 To dwell in shadows of eternity
 From all their weeping kinsfolk wildly rose.

How often hast thou heard such sounds as these
 Thro' years of dreamy languid life slow passed
 Amidst these stately groves of kindred trees
 Now sharing in thy fate. But men at last
 Across yon waste of sleepless ocean came
 To rule these isles as Britain's heritage,
 Fair shining jewels set within her crown

Imperial and claim
 Dominion for their race. With foresight safe
 They founded then each swiftly growing town.

And thus for thee the seeds of death were sown
 Tho' keen edg'd axe and biting saw thy knell
 But lately sounded, and with bitter groan
 And thund'ring crash thy form in anguish fell,
 No more thou'l hear the mournful kiwi call
 Or murmur of yon passing mountain stream,
 On thee no more the soft and tender light
 Of Southern Cross may fall
 Or parting rays of glowing sunset gleam
 Amongst thy boughs. Departed is thy might.

NEVIS (LEEWARD ISLANDS, WEST INDIES).

Dear Nevis, circled by the summer sea,
 Daughter of Vulcan and the Spanish main,
 Home of my fathers, thou cans't still enchain
 My thoughts and turn my wayward heart to thee,
 Altho' betwixt those far off days and me
 When first my sires found shelter from the train
 Of woes which followed those who fought in vain
 For exiled James, two hundred years there be.
 On thee great Nelson found his island bride,
 When here from harm he guarded thee and thine
 And yet but dawned his future glowing fame.
 Beneath thy palms they watched the sapphire tide
 And with them those whose name and blood are mine
 In thoughts of love forgot red war's dark game.

DRAKE.

They call thee "buccaneer," these little men
 Whose lives are spent in ease or pleasure vain,
 Who reck not of the stormy days that then
 Were shadowed by the gloomy power of Spain,
 That drenched in showers of blood the Northern fen
 And hid in darkness all that Spanish main,
 Whose magic voice had called to thee and thine,
 Singing a siren song beyond the tropic line.

They call thee "buccaneer," though long ago
 We learned that England's heritage was bought
 In days of old by men to whom we owe
 A debt beyond the power of human thought
 To reckon now. While the seas ebb and flow
 They croon of those who with our foemen fought
 And placed upon our island mother's brow
 The crown of Empire. One of those art thou.

What though from Spanish grasp was wrenched the
 fold,
 Washed thro' slow passing hours by scalding tears
 Of slaves in far Peru, who in the cold
 Of mountain snows all through the weary years
 Toiled beneath the lash, until they lost their hold
 On life, and freed by death from earthly fears
 Left vengeance to the awful hand of God
 On those who strewed with thorns the path they trod.

That thrice accursed gold in Spanish hands,
 Dim with the tears and blood so vainly shed
 Was wrung to satisfy the bold demands
 Of Alva's hell-hounds baying o'er the dead,
 The folk they slew on Holland's sea girt shore
 Dragging through mire the bowed and grizzled head,
 Or infant frail. Sure thy avenging sword
 Fought against fiends the battle of the Lord.

If "buccaneer" for thee be fitting name,
 Who, when our England at the hands of Spain
 Dreaded thro' anxious days such bitter shame,
 Swept with thy comrades victor o'er the main,
 Then must that word be cleansed of aught of blame
 For what of cruelty or evil stain
 When spoil was won from foes in open fight,
 Do annals tell to dim thine honour bright.

Thy country's foes were thine by land and sea,
 Whether by homeland coasts or when thy prow
 Clove that Pacific seen from top most tree
 Of Darien's darkly shaded western brow,
 Of Devon's noblest sons thy name wilt be
 For ever on the roll, world famous now,
 For in the darkling hour of England's need
 By men like thee from peril she was freed.

Surely for us those days have lessons yet
 When men so greatly dared, when Devon's sons,
 With those of sister shires, without regret
 Flung life away, rather than foreign guns

Should mar the peace of humble homes deep set
In apple orchards white, surely there runs
Within their children's veins the blood that then
Warmed to the fight for native combe and fen.

How often midst the charms of tropic seas,
Or in swift chase of western galleon tall
Neath press of sail before th' atlantic breeze
That hummed an ocean song thro' mast and fall,
Or fighting 'gainst the scurvy, dread disease,
Did come some thought of distant rose-clad hall
Of home and loved ones who perchance in vain
Might watch for thy return, thou scourge of Spain..

And, "buccaneer" or hero, so it fell
At last that on the far-off Western tide,
Whose voices of thy countless triumphs tell
With storm tried comrades watchful at thy side
Thy mighty spirit passed—Not in some dell
Of thy loved birthplace, but in ocean wide
Thine outworn body rests, fair fitting grave
For one who loved through life th' unconquered wave.

IMTARFA.

Malta, of old lay neath the Punic sway,
Enhancing later, Rome's imperial crown,
Loved of Saint Paul—upon a later day
Imtarfa on the conflict fierce looked down
'Twixt mail-clad Christian knight and Moslem brave
As reddened all with blood St. Elmo's wave.